

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 044747
ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 H-01 L-03 SSO-00
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DRAFTED BY INR:HHTSAUNDERS:HE
APPROVED BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY
ARA - MR. BUSHNELL
H - MR. BENNET
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S/S SGOLDSMITH
-----110716 212258Z /75
Z 212248Z FEB 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA FLASH

S E C R E T STATE 044747

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM CHRISTOPHER

E.O. 11652:XGDS-2

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PN, US

SUBJECT:RELEASE ON PANAMA

1. TEXT OF SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT EMERGING FROM
TODAY'S CLOSED SESSION OF THE SENATE HAS NOW BEEN RELEASED
WITHOUT CHANGE FROM THE VERSION SENT TO YOU EARLIER BY
SEPTTEL. THIS MESSAGE THEREFORE GIVES YOU THE GO-AHEAD TO
PASS TEXT TO GENERAL TORRIJOS AS SOON AS YOU CAN.

2. YOU MIGHT WISH TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS IN GIVING THIS
TO TORRIJOS:

-- SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BAYH FELT THAT RELEASE
OF A DETAILED REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS

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WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF AN ATTEMPT TO LAY TO
REST THE INTELLIGENCE ISSUES WHICH HAVE COME UP IN CONNEC-
TION WITH TREATY RATIFICATION. THE ADMINISTRATION HAD
URGED A MUCH LESS DETAILED REPORT FOR PUBLIC USE, BUT IT
BECAME APPARENT IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS THAT THE COMMITTEE
WOULD INSIST ON DETAILED REPORT. FYI. AT THAT POINT OUR
ATTENTION TURNED TO TRYING TO ASSURE

THAT THE REPORT WOULD HANDLE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLY AND MINIMIZE DAMAGE TO OUR INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS. END FYI.

-- SENATE LEADERSHIP HAS SHOWN UNDERSTANDING OF PROBLEMS CREATED FOR GENERAL TORRIJOS BY THE MANY ALLEGATIONS SURFACED IN THE PRESS HERE IN RECENT DAYS AND HAS TRIED TO ASSURE THAT THE REPORT ISSUED WOULD BE JUDICIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE WHILE PROVIDING ENOUGH DETAIL TO ASSURE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT THE SELECT COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS HAD BEEN THOROUGH.

-- YOU SHOULD DIRECT TORRIJOS' ATTENTION TO PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT WHICH STATE THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO INFLUENCE BY INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES ON THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. YOU SHOULD URGE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL READING OF THE HANDLING OF THE ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO INVOLVEMENT OF PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING BECAUSE THE REPORT TRIES TO MAKE CLEAR THAT MUCH OF THE MATERIAL WHICH HAS BECOME PUBLIC IS IN THE NATURE OF SECOND HAND ALLEGATIONS AND THAT THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE REPORT IS BASED IS THEREFORE INCONCLUSIVE. HOPEFULLY, A CAREFUL READING OF THIS SECTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE DISTINCTION MADE IN THE REPORT COULD PROVIDE TORRIJOS A BASIS FOR DEALING WITH THE REPORT PUBLICLY.

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-- YOU SHOULD COUNSEL FORBEARANCE AND PATIENCE IN THE HOPE THAT TODAY'S HEARINGS AND ATTENDANT PUBLICITY WILL TURN OUT TO BE A DESPERATE EFFORT BY OPPONENTS OF THE TREATY TO BLOCK RATIFICATION.

3. FOR REASONS WE DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND, REPORT WAS RELEASED BEFORE END OF TODAY'S SENATE SESSION. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE DEBATE WOULD RUN LONGER THAN EXPECTED, BUT SINCE THE REPORT HAS BEEN RELEASED, YOU SHOULD GET IT TO TORRIJOS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

VANCE

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